A Tinker.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
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CROP THE CONJURER

Telling the good Boys and Girls their Fortunes.

THE

WISDOM

OF

Crop the Conjurer.

EXEMPLIFIED

In several Characters of good and bad Boys, with an impartial Account of the celebrated

TOM TROT,

Who rode before all the Boys in the Kingdom till he arrived at the Top of the Hill called

LEARNING.

WRITTEN

For the Imitation of those who love themselves.

ADORNED WITH CUTS.

WELLINGTON:
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PREFACE.

I CANNOT help making some apology for the intrusion of this little piece, especially as the main object of it (encouraging a love of learning or reading in the minds of children) is excited by such rewards and punishments as have been unjustly condemned, but without maturely weighing the matter.

Whatever stimulates children to a love of Virtue or Learning, ought always to be applied. The experienced physician will gild the pill, not only to take the eye, but to take the nauseous taste away. Coaches, horses, &c. are the only things which most engage the attention of children; they are the only blessings their infant understandings are capable of

comprehending; and if it is an evil to promise these, it can only be a partial evil, which wears away as the judgment becomes better informed in more advanced years.

But that which seems more injurious, (the representing of hobgoblins, monsters, &c.) is as soon confuted as the other, not ill-meant, but ill-judged opinion.

The tempers of children are as various as those of grown people; some too are not to be led by promises; they must have threatenings, and those suited to their understanding; such as give tremendous ideas, and will make an impression on the mind, till they are more capable of receiving greater objects. To give serious threatenings to children, only lasts till they grow a few years older, and then they look upon all that has been told them, however serious, only as bugbears to frighten babies. Whereas, the more out of the way objects of punishment are represented in youth, the better will be the relish for sublime truths, when they come to maturer years.

Crop the Conjurer.

HALLOO! halloo! halloo! what's the matter?—Stand clear! Here comes CROP the CONJURER. Now, little boys and girls, is the time to have your fortunes told.

Pray tell me my fortune, good Mr. Crop, says Tim Prattle. Your fortune; truly, your fortune will be to be whipped this afternoon. No, no, that will be my misfortune! Besides, I am sure you do not know that; for I shall stay at home, and not go to school. Very well, Master Prattle, very well; but you shall be whipped for all that, so get you gone. And so it was: for though Tim did not go to school, his father flogged him for stealing some apples at home.

I should have told you more about this famous Crop the Conjurer, if Tim had not stopped me with his prattle; but now having a little leisure, I will make you all as wise as myself. He is grandson to old nurse Dandlem, who used to cut his hair close to his head all round: for she would say that thick long hair made boys look like dunces.

He had the extraordinary method of telling what would become of any who applied to him; nay, he told me I should write his life, and not one little

boy or girl in ten read it through before they had torn it to pieces, which however well it might answer the Publisher's end who sells this book, would answer no other end to the buyers, than teaching them to keep their money in their pockets, and not to bestow books on slovenly children.

Crop was a very clever fellow, I assure you; and when a very little boy indeed, could read his primer, or any thing else he had a mind for. He has a great deal of learning now, and will make any little boy or girl good, if they will attend to his instructions.

Now pray, Mr. Crop, tell me my fortune, says Billy Learnwell. Yes, and with much pleasure, says Crop: You will be a great man, for you mind your book, you shall have horses and coaches plenty, and every thing you wish for, if you continue in the same good way you are now in.

Sam Lickspit was next: You shall have a great many good thrashings for

stealing pies, and bread and butter. So take care you are not too fond of your belly, else your breech may pay for it: and this is the reason why every little boy has two eyes and but one mouth, that they may see many nice things, without wanting to eat them all. Ay, but, says Sam, my mouth is twice as large as my eyes, and I can eat a tart as big as my hand.

For a custard I'd run a whole mile,
Tho' it rain'd cats and dogs all the while.
I mind not the smart of my breech,
So I get but a pie in my reach.

Sam Lickspit, one day, when the cook was out, stole into the pantry, and with a knife cut the top crust all round the dish of a gooseberry pie; then taking it off, ate all the inside, and put the top on again, so that nobody knew it till the next day, when it came up to table, and his mother was cutting it open; she was surprised to find it empty, and immediately laid it on Sam,

who was stooping under the table, pretending he was picking up a fork that he dropped on purpose. Ay, you may hide yourself, says his mother, but you shall have your trimmings, you audacious wretch, to serve me in this manner; how dare you have the face to look at me!

Sam began to cry and blubber, and make excuses, denying it all the while, till at last, says he, You need not make such a piece of work about a bit of pie, I will eat the crust when I am hungry: which he thought was

making full amends for devouring the inside.

Well, says Mr. Crop, I will never throw away my advice on any one, nor tell any one the way to be good a second time, if they do not follow my advice the first. Obstinate boys are like people who walk upon their heads, and of course see every thing the wrong way; they laugh at those who walk on their feet, because they suppose themselves treading in the clouds, their heads being so much higher than their understandings. If they are told to mind their book, and they will become great men, they think they are great enough already, especially if they are sluggish boys, and can command a few little ones at play, as was the case with Sam Lickspit, who always had a share of the apples, oranges, and other things which his playmates, who were less than himself, bought; but if he had any thing good of his own, and the boys came round him, he would say, They who

ask shall not have any, and they who do not ask, do not want any.

Miss Lydia Lieabed was the next to have her fortune told, and came stretching and yawning to Mr. Crop,

who, knowing her to be just awake, asked her if she was up for the whole day? at the same time repeating these lines—

'Tis a pity to rise when the sun is so high,
As it soon will sink down in the westernmost sky,
Then your labour and toil will all be in vain,
And your trouble return in undressing again.

Some think those beneath them, who are not equal to them in rudeness. Miss Lydia thought all beneath her, who could not lie in bed as long, and have their breakfast in bed, then take another nap till twelve o'clock, and then scold the maid for coming to call them. She thought that Mr. Crop would have given her at least a coach and six; but Crop always spoke the truth, and never flattered any one: He told her, if she would enjoy a coach and six, she must rise in the morning at six o'clock; but

Miss Lydia thought it very vulgar to rise with the ploughman and milk-maid, choosing rather to lie and dream of a coach, than to get up and possess one.

Now for Jack Wildboy, with his wicked look, what will be his fortune, Mr. Crop? Why, if you will hear a few of his tricks, every one of you will be able to foretell as I am; for though I know, by my art, the end of good and bad boys, yet any body may tell by their actions whether they will be great or happy; for bad boys never make great men; idle boys never have horses, nor wicked ones enjoy the love or respect of their friends. It is hard to teach them any good habits, and much harder to break them of bad ones.

The first vice which Jack Wildboy was guilty of, was a contempt for old age, which is as great a fault as any boy or girl can possess: for if they have not a reverence for those who must know better than themselves, whom will they fear? Not those of equal age,

no! no! Jack Wildboy was afraid of nothing, nor any body.

One day, as a poor blind man was crossing the road, Jack cut a stick out of the hedge, split it at one end, and then put it on the tail of the dog that was leading the poor man on the side of a ditch, which made the dog yelp and

cry, and pull the beggar about, who knew not what was the matter with his dog, therefore could give him no assistance. But Jack was not content with this, he cut the leather the man

held the dog by, which directly ran away howling with the stick on his tail, and left the poor man without a guide, who, not knowing a step of his way, tumbled into the ditch, and cried out for help: when Jack, pretending he was just then passing that way, asked him what was the matter? Oh! said the poor man, my dog was taken with a fit and broke away from me; and I, being blind, missed my step, and tumbled into the ditch. Oh! poor fellow, says Jack, I am very sorry; here, lay hold of my

hand, I will help you out; and so he did, but it was only to play another wicked trick with him.

Jack had got with him his little dog Mopsey, who would fetch and carry, and run into the water for a bit of stick, stone, or cork, or any thing Jack had a mind to send him for. So Jack told the poor man he was very sorry for his misfortune, and was more so, because he could not see him safe home, as he was going quite a different road: But, says Jack, I have a little dog I can lend you, and here is a bit of string, which, joined to the remainder of your leather, will make a tolerable leader for you: so Jack tied the dog to the string, and gave it to the poor man. Jack wished him safe home with his new dog, and pretended to go another way; but he went before, shewing Mopsey a piece of stick, who was eager to be running for it, till they came to a pond, then Jack wickedly threw in the stick, and Mopsey jumping in, pulled the poor

man after him; but luckily for the beggar, the pond was not very deep, yet the sudden fall soused him over head and ears. This was the height of Jack's pleasure, who could not help laughing aloud, so that the poor man heard him; and having crawled out as well as he could, addressed the villain in the following manner: My misfortune seems to afford you infinite merriment; but if you consider how unequal are the qualities you and I possess, there will not be much reason for triumph: you are a young rogue, who can see any thing but your own good; I am a poor blind man, that experiences nothing but misery: where is the merit in deceiving a fool, or laying a stumbling block for the blind? had you led me home, you would then indeed have shewn a right use of the light you enjoy, and evinced the superior blessing you possess. My infirmities, my years, should have claimed this, and an old man's obligation would have blessed you, a boy, for doing what

was your duty. This had very little effect on Jack, who called Mopsey to him, and ran home, leaving the poor man to do the best for himself.

It was not long after, that, in a very dark night, he and a wicked companion seeing a poor old woman coming up the town where he lived with a lantern, they contrived to throw a long cord over a high sign-post. Jack had hold of one end with a hook fastened to it; his companion laid hold of the other, and stood in a dark corner some distance off: so when the poor old woman

came close to Jack, he pretended he had lost a halfpenny, and the good-natured woman lending her lantern to him, he fastened it to the hook, and hallooed out aloud, Now for it! which his companion hearing, instantly hauled up the lantern to the top of the sign-post, then fastened the string to a nail, and ran home: leaving the poor woman to find her way in the dark.

Thus you see that the same boy who could not pity blindness and poverty, had no reverence for old age, or respect for good nature. The woman's kindness was equally the same in lending the lantern, whether Jack really lost, or only pretended to lose the halfpenny: yet, he who led the blind out of the way, took from the aged woman what little light her contrivance had assisted her with.

Now I think there needs no conjurer to tell what will become of Jack Wildboy, or any other boy who follows his example. Mr. Crop therefore declines

giving his opinion in a case which is rendered so very plain and easy by his naughty life; but will presently set before them another case of a good boy, which though any one may be assured will end in happiness, yet none can tell how many pleasures and pastimes he will enjoy.

Where is there a little boy or girl who loves bad apples or plums, or sour tarts? And yet all naughty children are like those; and therefore no one can love or respect them, much less will they encourage them.

Mr. Crop will have nothing to say to any one who does not learn his book without murmuring, and go to school cheerfully; not wanting bread and butter to carry with him, or asking for halfpence to buy cherries or marbles to play with by the way, a trick Mr. Crop knows many to be guilty of. Some too, after Easter, Christmas, or Whitsuntide holidays, have been very unwilling to go to school again; insomuch, that some

one has been forced to go and make an excuse to their master for their not having got their tasks, which is using them to very bad habits; for if they are excused at Easter, they will want the same indulgence at Whitsuntide; and when Christmas comes, will think it very cruel to have a task to get.

Now I must inform such idle boys that, by such practices, they will lose three months out of twelve, be looked upon as great dunces, and let all the little boys go before them; but this is

not all, for they will be obliged to go to school till they are fifteen or sixteen years old, which is a very sad sight indeed. It was not so with Tom Trot; no, no, he could get up in a morning, and learn as much before breakfast as most boys could in a whole day. This is the good boy Mr, Crop promised, a little while ago, to give you some account of.

Tom Trot, notwithstanding what any one may say to the contrary, was so called from the vast progress he made in learning. He was soon through the Primer, and trotted over the Spelling-Book with more ease than my Lord Winbert's courser would over the Kentish hills; and though Giles Gingerbread was said to gallop through his gingerbread books, yet I can assure you, it was but a snail's gallop, when compared to Tom Trot. Tom Trot was as poor as he, and used to watch round the field of Farmer Rye, with a pair of clappers in his hand, to frighten the

birds from the corn. He was the author of the following song, which he sung as he sat in the field:

BEWARE, birds and crows,
For here come the clappers,
To knock you down backwards:
Beware, birds and crows.

Tom Trot says beware,
For he has the clappers,
To knock you down backwards:
Tom Trot says beware.

Make haste, get you home,
For fear of the clappers,
They'll knock you down backwards:
Make haste, get you home.

Take care of your young,
Tell them of the clappers,
That knock you down backwards:
Take care of your young.

Tom Trot will be just,
While he has the clappers,
To knock you down backwards:
Tom Trot will be just,

To good Farmer Rye,
For they are his clappers,
That knock you down backwards:
I serve Farmer Rye.

Tom Trot was famous over all the country for keeping the birds away; for no sooner did he begin to sing, than they all took to their wings, and fled with the greatest precipitation imaginable; not that Tom had a bad voice, no, he had a tolerable good one; but they knew that he would be as good as his word, if they came within his reach.

But Tom did not keep this employment long; he was too good a boy to be passed over with neglect. A gentleman, therefore, who lived in the town, took particular notice of him, one day as he was riding by the field,

when Tom was singing, and hired him to teach his little boy to read; which was a much better employment than frightening crows, and which drew upon him the ill-natured nick-names of many boys, who could not bear to see him taken notice of, while they received no mark of favour from any one.

They would call him Old Tom, and Scarecrow; but this Tom had too great sense to mind, and only laughed at them for their envy, at the same time repeating these lines:

All those who love learning and rules,
Must bear with the envy of fools;
And they who true wisdom would have,
Will give an offence to the knave.

Tom's scholar was not so bright as himself, and was a long while before he could say his A, B, C, which when

he had learned, Tom set the alphabet in

verse, repeating it first in this manner:

A Apple, B Bear, C Custard, D Deer.

Now, says Tom, say that. Ay, says Jack, for that was his name:

A Apple, B Custard, C Deer, D Bear;

and thought himself a very clever fellow when Tom laughed at him; but Tom only laughed at his ignorance.

Tom finding he could make nothing of him, gave him up, and would not teach him any longer, but advised his father to make a chimney-sweeper of him; for though, says he, Jack will not climb up the Hill of Learning, he may get up a chimney well enough; and though he will not burden his head with sense, he may carry a good load of soot upon his back. Jack's father took Tom Trot's advice, and put him apprentice to Blackbrush, who lived at the bottom of the town. Only see what a pretty figure he cuts!

This is the reward of idleness, and every one who will not mind his book, should be served so, if I was King, said Tom Trot.

Jack's father now took Tom as his son, and bought him all the books in the world; which Tom made very good use of, but never ate them, as Giles Gingerbread did his; nor did the dogs tear them or dirty them. Tom pursued his studies, and soon published many pieces for the amusement of good children.

He that would merry be,
Must learn his A, B, C;
And he that would soon grow wise,
At six o'clock must rise.

They who love loit'ring and play,
And throwing advice away;
They must without supper go,
And plum-cakes and pan-cakes too.

Crop the Conjurer, after having told his story of Tom Trot, took his leave of all the little boys and girls, who were standing round to hear it, and immediately set off to some other town, for the same purpose of advising all good children to love Learning.

I now must take my leave with the same advice, hoping that many may be made better by the instruction contained in this little book; assuring every good child, that Learning is the only way to make them beloved and respected by all, and useful, by informing the understandings of those who know not so much as themselves.

FINIS.

A Jew.